

BASKIN-ROBBINS CHRISTIANITY

Updated February 3, 2009 (first published December 18, 1995) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article) -

The July 1995 issue of *Charisma* magazine contained an article entitled “We Can Win Our Cities Together,” calling for ecumenical evangelism. It was written by Ted Haggard, pastor of the charismatic New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Haggard claimed that the variety among churches and denominations is like that found in a Baskin-Robbins ice cream store, and that the differences are intended by God to provide variety in “the body of Christ.” [Note: In 2006 Haggard resigned as senior pastor of New Life on the revelation of exploits with a homosexual prostitute.]

“I love all kinds of ice cream. Sometimes I want vanilla with caramel topping, whipped cream, lots of nuts and a cherry. Other times I want Rocky Road, banana or chocolate chip. That’s why I love Baskin-Robbins ice cream stores. They have 31 flavors, and I can always find something I like.

“In Colorado Springs, Colorado, where I am a pastor, we enjoy 90 FLAVORS OF CHURCHES. Most of them stand on Christ as their cornerstone and embrace the Bible as their authority. So in each of them, you can discover the same basic truths that make eternal life available to all people. ...

“When I talk about various ‘flavors’ in the body of Christ, I am not promoting an ecumenical or humanistic movement that embraces all people of all faiths as brothers and sisters. I am not suggesting that we share the same communion with Muslims, Buddhists, New Agers or others who don’t acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the only source of salvation.

“Instead I am saying that we need to appreciate the respected interpretations of Scripture that exist in the many Christian denominations. And I believe the Lord planned for local churches to be different and distinct for a reason.

“Let’s say that on Main Street USA there are five Christian churches. Let’s also assume that each of the pastors has elected to focus on the absolutes of Scripture. There is a Presbyterian, Baptist, Catholic, charismatic and Methodist. ...

“What’s the bottom line? Our primary purpose does not require every church to reach every person. That would be impossible. Besides, God wants to reach the world through His many-member body. ...

“Have you erected any fences between your church and the congregation down the street? have you judged other Christian groups in your heart, or openly criticized them? I BELIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CALLING US TO MOVE OUR FENCES AND DEMONSTRATE TO A WATCHING WORLD THAT WE ARE UNITED” (emphasis added) (Ted Haggard, “We Can Win Our Cities ... Together,” *Charisma*, July 1995, pp. 34-36).

This is an incredibly unscriptural testimony, but it has the ring of truth to many weak Christians. Consider the following errors in Haggard’s thinking:

1. DOCTRINE IS NOT SOMETHING TO BE PREFERRED LIKE ICE CREAM; IT IS SOMETHING TO BE GROUNDED IN, CONVINCED OF, DOGMATIC ABOUT, MILITANT FOR. This is what the Apostle Paul said about doctrine: “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17). Paul instructed Timothy not to allow ANY OTHER DOCTRINE (1 Timothy 1:3). Jude instructed God’s people to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). The ecumenical approach described in the previous article is forbidden and condemned because it downplays doctrinal purity. God

intends the Christian to be grounded in apostolic doctrine and apostolic doctrine ALONE. Every false doctrine is to be rejected. Haggard claims we should look upon false doctrine as merely another flavor of ice cream. God says we are to look upon it as a great error.

2. IT IS NOT TRUE THAT MOST CHURCHES IN COLORADO SPRINGS (OR IN ANY OTHER CITY IN NORTH AMERICA, FOR THAT MATTER) “STAND ON CHRIST AS THEIR CORNERSTONE AND EMBRACE THE BIBLE AS THEIR AUTHORITY.” On the authority of 2 Corinthians 11, we must ask what Christ, what gospel, what spirit? Very few preachers, even those who claim to be evangelical, even believe the Bible is the absolute, perfect, verbal-plenarily inspired Word of God. Go from church to church and ask the pastors how a person can obtain eternal life, and you will receive many different answers. Some mix in baptism for salvation. Some claim that sacraments are required. Others claim that “holding out faithful” is required for salvation. Most churches today preach false gospels. Most intermingle works and sacraments with grace. Paul said such a “gospel” is cursed of God (Galatians 1). To pretend that most churches in any North American city are sound in the basic truths of the Gospel and are properly founded upon the Bible is incredible blindness.

3. MANY ECUMENISTS CLAIM NOT TO BE ECUMENICAL! Haggard says he is not promoting an “ecumenical or humanistic” movement. Yet, only a few words later he calls for relations between Presbyterians, Baptists, Catholics, Charismatics, and Methodists. If that is not ecumenism, there is no such thing! Most Presbyterian and Methodist churches today are Modernistic. The Presbyterian Church USA and the United Methodists are the largest groups in the United States, and they are both radically modernistic. The vast majority of the professors in these denominational seminaries are Modernists who do not believe Adam and Eve were real people; who do not believe Moses wrote the Pentateuch; who question Christ’s virgin birth, miracles, atonement, resurrection, and ascension. We have documented this in many articles. My friends, the god of the modernistic Protestant preacher is as pagan as that of Islam or Buddhism or New Age. To “acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the only source of salvation” is not sufficient. What Jesus Christ? What salvation? These hard questions must be asked when discerning truth from error in today’s apostate Christendom.

4. HAGGARD CLAIMS THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CALLING FOR FENCES TO BE REMOVED BETWEEN CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS. That is not what the Holy Spirit calls for in the Bible. Consider what Timothy was to do at Ephesus: “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some THAT THEY TEACH NO OTHER DOCTRINE” (1 Timothy 1:3). As a preacher, Timothy’s job was to make certain that pure doctrine and ONLY pure doctrine was taught at Ephesus. He was to deal unhesitatingly with anyone that attempted to teach false doctrine. There can be no doubt that this is the mind of the Holy Spirit as it is expressed in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit tells us that one of the chief jobs of a pastor is to hold “fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able to sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers ... whose mouths must be stopped ... Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:9-13). THE HOLY SPIRIT DID NOT INSTRUCT PASTORS TO LOOK UPON DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES AS BLESSINGS BUT AS HERESIES.

Haggard tells us that the Holy Spirit has changed His mind. Upon what authority are we to believe this? Did Haggard have a revelation that has superseded the Scriptures? If so, he received a revelation from the devil, because Revelation 22 warns against adding to or subtracting from the words of the Bible. The only thing we know for certain about the mind of the Holy Spirit is that which we read in the Bible. The Bible says the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13); He is first and foremost concerned about truth. “For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of THE TRUTH that is in thee,

even as thou walkest in THE TRUTH. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk IN TRUTH” (3 John 3-4).

The churches are not ice cream parlors. They are headquarters for a bold and militant proclamation of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

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